

With this in mind, it is noted that in paragraph 1 of the Office Action claims 1-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by International Patent Publication PCT/NO99/00280 hereinafter after the PCT '280 reference. This rejection is respectfully traversed in that the PCT '280 reference has an international publication date of April 6, 2000 and an international filing date of September 14, 1999 each of which are subsequent to Applicants' effective filing date. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the PCT '280 reference is not prior art with respect to Applicants' claimed invention and thus fails to anticipate that which is presently set forth by Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the PCT '280 reference be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner and that claims 1-5 be indicated as being allowable over the prior art of record.

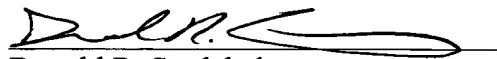
Furthermore, with respect to paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the Office Action, each of these paragraphs set forth rejections of remaining claims 6-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the PCT '280 reference in view of several secondary references namely U.S. Patent No. 5,160,456 issued to Lahn et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,186,801 issued to Madgavkar et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,165,633 issued to Negishi and U.S. Patent No. 5,290,641 issued to Harashima. Each of these rejections are respectfully traversed in that as noted hereinabove, the PCT '280 reference is no longer available to the Examiner as prior art. Consequently, it is respectfully submitted that the secondary references set forth in each of paragraphs 2-6, in the absence of the teachings of the PCT '280 reference, clearly fail to render obvious that which is presently set forth by Applicants' claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections of claims 6-17 be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner and that such claims be passed to issue.

With respect to the Examiner's response to Applicants' arguments filed August 26, 2004, it is respectfully submitted that further discussion with respect to the merits of these arguments is no longer believed to be warranted in that the PCT '280 reference is no longer viable prior art with respect to the presently claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Applicants' claimed invention as set forth in claims 1-17 clearly distinguish over the prior art of record available to the Examiner and are in proper condition for allowance.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing it is respectfully requested that the rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 1-17 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner believe a conference would be of benefit in expediting the prosecution of the instant application, he is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,



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